‘Introducing Mulk Raj Anand: the colonial politics of collaboration’

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Abstract

Collaboration is often understood as central to modernist literary production. The recent turn to a transnational or globalised understanding of modernism has made attention to collaborations across races and cultures all the more pressing. This article attends to the colonial politics of collaboration by exploring a specific instance of a particular genre: the introductions written by white, male, metropolitan modernists to texts by colonial authors. Focusing initially on introductions by Ford Madox Ford, Arthur Symons, Edmund Gosse and W. B. Yeats to texts by Jean Rhys, Sarojini Naidu and Rabindranath Tagore, the article then looks in detail at the prefaces written by E. M. Forster and Leonard Woolf to writing by Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable*, 1935 and *Letters on India*, 1942). By putting pressure on the term ‘collaboration’ itself – and the frequent slippage to ‘collaborationist’ in relation to scholarship on Anand – this article will investigate the oft-overlooked genre of the introduction to ask questions crucial to the wider study of global modernisms. It will tease out the complex relationships, networks, and publishing histories signalled by this conjunction of introduction and text. These prefatory texts are marked by imperial gestures of cultural patronage, framing and mediation but are also the very place where these gestures and hierarchies are contested and overturned.

Keywords

Collaboration, modernism, colonialism, introduction, Mulk Raj Anand, E. M. Foster, Leonard Woolf

Literary modernism can be defined and understood through a collaborative aesthetic. The manifesto culture of Imagism or Futurism, for example, led to collective affiliations across media and genre. Jointly authored texts such as those by Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford (*The Inheritors*, 1901; *Romance*, 1903; *The Nature of a Crime,* 1909), or collaborative book production such as between sisters Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell for the Hogarth Press, speak to the ways in which the lone artist model falls short of accounting for modernist literary culture.

Critics such as Jack Stillinger have explored the variety of ways in which 'situations where someone other than the nominal author is essentially and inextricably a part of the authorship' speak so forcefully to a transhistorical understanding of literary production.[1] This case has also been made in relation to specific writers. Richard Badenhausen, for instance, identifies collaboration as a 'life-long operating procedure' for T. S. Eliot, and a mode which can be used to explain his aesthetic principles and methodology.[2] Collaboration, according to Badenhausen, was not only Eliot's 'primary compositional strategy' (through allusion as well as multiple authorship) but also key to his thinking on personality, audience and translation.[3]

The concept of 'collaboration' has become particularly resonant of late in the context of the 'new modernist studies' with its increasingly globalised perspective. By way of marking the networks and migrations on which a globalised modernism relies, much critical attention has been paid to the transnational exchanges that occurred within and across the boundaries and territories of the British empire. The term collaboration, with its emphasis on active partnership, moves us away from models of interchange which consolidate a one-way influence that moves outwards from the metropolitan heart of empire. As several critics have noted, however, an uncritical account of such 'collaborations' risks making a fetish object of transnationalism, and ignoring the material conditions of these migrations.[4] This can lead to flattened or idealised accounts within which colonial writers somehow authenticate or make legitimate a canonical or Eurocentric modernism, thus reversing the earlier tendency by which attention to colonial writers was 'justified' by their connection to canonical British modernists.

A fresh approach to transnational cultural exchange in the context of empire can be gained through attention to a particular phenomenon: the many introductions written by white, male metropolitan modernists to texts by colonial writers published in Britain. The circumstances of production of these prefatory texts point to the personal networks and publishing conditions which undergird works of colonial modernism. In turn, such an approach provides a way of tracing interactions between colonial and metropolitan writers in more ambivalent and layered terms. Prefatory texts also offer an approach which combines book and publishing history with biographical and content-based readings. While these publications might be seen as collaborative given that both preface and text appear within the same cover, their 'collaboration' could also be said to happen *only* at the level of book production

and after the fact of the main text's composition. The site of collaboration, therefore, is also the site or process of reading. But the conjunction is often the public face of a wider context of exchange between the writers concerned and therefore relates to other instances of collaborative work. In this way, these introductions complicate, and invite us to explore, the politics and contours of collaboration itself. In what ways are the complex politics of transnational collaboration enacted or overturned in these dual texts? What pressure do imperial hierarchies place on the very possibility of collaboration, and how might this pressure be marked in the formal elements of the relationship between introduction and text?

A brief word on terminology is called for at this point in relation to the 'preface' versus the 'introduction'. The former is conventionally understood as elaborating on the genesis, composition or translation of the work to follow. A preface is often written by the author of the main text, or by someone involved in the production of the titular text. An introduction, by contrast, is invariably separately authored and, while it may treat issues of composition, biography, reception, also concerns the content of the text to follow. That said, of course, these paratextual pieces are flexible and variable forms, and conventions in relation to authorship and content are slippery indeed. For the most part, the texts under consideration here are 'introductions', but are at times called 'prefaces' by their own authors.

In Gayatri Spivak's 'Translator's Preface' to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, she reflects at length on the nature of the preface and the questions it raises in relation to origins, authority and signification. Whether the author of preface and text are the same or not, the preface 'is a necessary gesture of homage and parricide, for the book (the father) makes a claim of authority or origin which is both true and false'.[5] The preface both lauds and dethrones (at the very least through its primary position). It also, as she puts it, 'harbors a lie' in its 'pretense at writing *before* a text that one must have read *before* the preface can be written'.[6] Similarly in its gesture of exposition or exegesis, the introduction occupies a slippery position that hovers between the reconstitution of a book not yet read, and text in its own right (but written under the sign of another author). All these issues take on particular significance in the context of colonial modernism, where questions of patronage, cultural and racial hierarchy are paramount. In the case of the trans-cultural introductions we will examine here, questions of power are crucial. Whereas the introduction can be seen as subsidiary – often ignored or skipped over by a reader –

here they are included or commissioned to confer legitimacy or even as a pre-condition of publication. They hold the power to confer or smooth the route to publication but also hermeneutic power: they govern or determine how the text might be read, particularly given its treatment of a supposedly 'unfamiliar' or 'foreign' culture. Attention to these introductions, then, takes us back to collaboration as multiple authorship, but simultaneously complicates that designation in that we have two separate texts under one cover. Scholarship on collaborative relations within transnational or global modernism has tended to focus on 'networks' and more abstracted or ephemeral partnerships or groupings. This essay will use a very specific textual partnership as a means to explore such wider forms of collaboration.

Ford Madox Ford's introduction to Dominican writer Jean Rhys' first collection of short fiction, *The Left Bank and Other Stories* (1927), exemplifies the imposition of an imperial power dynamic on to the already hierarchical nature of this form of collaboration. Not only did Ford facilitate publication and advise a name change (from Ella Gwendolyn Rees Williams), but the bulk of his introduction is in fact his own piece on Paris' Left Bank: more an addition than an introduction to the volume. Indeed, its title – 'Preface: Rive Gauche' - indicates its place as an introduction to the geographical location rather than the stories to follow. When he does reference Rhys, her writing and its 'unique voice' are coterminous with her Dominican identity: 'coming from the Antilles, with a terrifying insight and a terrific – an almost lurid! – passion for stating the case of the underdog, she has let her pen loose on the Left Banks of the Old World'.[7] Ford displays his own familiarity with the area in order that he can be relied upon as a judge of Rhys' skill in representation. He also suggests that his preface compensates for a lack of geographical specificity found in her stories: he sets the scene, or makes up for this omission.[8] As with so many introductions of this kind, questions of cultural translation, influence and access are foregrounded. The preface writer both marks the 'otherness' of what's to follow at the same time as he underscores his own perspicacity in recognising its insights. He suggests that the collaboration in fact confers status on him: 'I have not so much been asked, as I have asked to be allowed the privilege of supplying this Preface' and that their immortality is intimately bound together: 'I hope I shall bring her a few readers' when her ashes are scattered 'a grain or so of my scattered and forgotten dust may go in too, in the folds'.[9] This is collaboration highly conscious of its own conditions and fissures.

This article will briefly consider introductions by Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse to poetry collections by Sarojini Naidu, and by W. B. Yeats to Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, before focusing specifically on the introductions by E. M. Forster and Leonard Woolf to fictional and non-fictional texts by the Indian writer and nationalist, Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable*, 1935, and *Letters on India*, 1942). Introductions by metropolitan intellectuals often accompanied the first edition and announced themselves as facilitating entry to the publishing marketplace. In the case of Anand's *Untouchable*, for example, Forster's preface was a made a condition of publication by Wishart and served to contain or 'translate' the novel for a metropolitan audience supposedly unready or unprepared for the reading experience. As Amardeep Singh writes in a rare article on this topic: 'the distinction between preface and text can be the very site of enforcement of colonial authority […] the split between preface and text merely heightens a sense of colonial alterity as the canonical preface-writer assumes a European readership, and poses the non-European writer's culture as remote and unrecognizable'.[10] This element of hierarchical cultural translation exists in all the examples gathered here, but a more nuanced account reveals elements that complicate this narrative. Such complication can be found in points of disruption between introduction and text, or interchanges between the writers that complicate or extend the particular relationship performed in the volume itself. In any case, these 'collaborations', however fraught, are worthy of further attention both as a genre in themselves and for the insights they afford into the connections between metropolitan and colonial modernists in London.

The first two poetry collections by the Indian poet Sarojini Naidu were published in London by Heinemann and introduced by prominent metropolitan writers: Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse respectively. Soon after her arrival in London as a teenager in 1895, Naidu (then Chattopadhyay) purchased the first issue of Symons' magazine, *The Savoy*, and entered into a correspondence and then a friendship with its co-founder. By the following year she was published in the magazine and her circle had widened to include other members of the Rhymers Club, including W. B. Yeats. As a student at King's College London's Ladies Department she was taught by Rhymer Club member and poet Victor Plarr and through these networks came to know Edmund Gosse. As I have explored elsewhere, Naidu was a regular attendee at Yeats' Monday evening gatherings in his

home at Woburn Buildings.[11] Through these networks, Symons and Gosse came to write the introductions to her first collections of poetry (*The Golden Threshold*, 1905 and *The Bird of Time*, 1912). These introductions clearly exemplify the dynamic of metropolitan 'mentor' and colonial 'ingénue' exacerbated by the age and gender difference between preface authors and poet. Naidu is infantilised, orientalised and eroticized. Symons' introduction to *The Golden Threshold* begins with an account of his role in actually getting the poems to press against the will of the self-deprecating, teenage poet. Quoting liberally from her letters to him – to publicly authenticate the relationship - he offers readers a brief biography that repeatedly turns to her physical appearance: 'She was dressed always in clinging dresses of Eastern silk, and as she was so small […] you might have taken her for a child'.[12] He both affirms her as 'other', a product of the 'East' and 'un-English' at the same time as he sets out her decadent aesthetic: the 'agony of sensation' and 'desire of beauty' found in her poetry.[13] Through Naidu's writing, Symons asserts, he seems to 'touch and take hold upon the East', as though her writing offers unmediated access to a notion of 'Eastern culture' but is simultaneously reliant on his position as facilitator and mediator. [14]

The volume was dedicated to Gosse and included a frontispiece drawing of a young Naidu by J. B. Yeats. The publication is very much a product of its 1890s context and Naidu's position, both feted and marginalised, within this circle of male 1890s artists and writers. But the poems themselves at times deviate from and challenge the introduction in their focus on a gendered and often subtly political subject matter. Naidu's references to folk songs, Hindu gods and goddesses chime with Yeats' revivalist nationalism, but in poems such as 'The Pardah Nashin' and 'Suttee' Naidu articulates a shift between traditional practices and virtues and modern womanhood. In the former poem, for example, 'no hand unsanctioned dares/ Unveil the mysteries of her grace' at the same time as Naidu exposes the zenana through her poetic gaze.[15] In 'Suttee', also, Naidu gives first person voice to the widow about to die on her husband's pyre: 'Life of my life, Death's bitter sword/Hath severed us like a broken word,/ Rent us in twain who are but one…/Shall the flesh survive when the soul is gone?'[16] The speaker seems almost to be questioning the practice; repeated ellipses offer moments of equivocation. So while Naidu's reception in Britain was clearly amplified by the endorsement of these well-known literary figures, and Symons introduction set the tone for many of the critical

narratives about her poetry, a more in-depth reading of the poems themselves counters the framing text in the absences or gaps it reveals in Symons' assessment.

Edmund Gosse's introduction to her second volume of poetry *The Bird of Time* (1912) refers back to Symons' earlier preface and the change in her profile in the intervening seven years. In a common trope, he underscores her prominence and hence the redundant nature of his introduction, written only under duress: 'It is only at the request, that is to say the command, of a dear and valued friend that I consent to write these few sentences […] It would seem that an "introduction" can only be needed when the personage to be "introduced" is unknown in a world prepared to welcome her but still ignorant of her qualities. This is certainly not the case with Mrs. Naidu'.[17] Keen, however, to stress his own role in her development, he introduces the narrative of mimicry that came to dominate discussions of her poetry. Her political activism, in contrast, was exempt from this narrative and seen as distinctly separate from her literary endeavours. Her early verses, he writes, were 'skilful in form, correct in grammar' but 'totally without individuality […] the note of the mocking-bird with a vengeance […] I advised the consignment of all that she had written, in this falsely English vein, to the waste-paper basket' and Naidu became 'a genuine Indian poet of the Deccan, not a clever machine-made imitator of the English classics'.[18] Whether in response to Gosse's advice or not, Naidu's poetry contains not a single reference to London. But one of the effects of Gosse's narrative has been to instigate an overly binary and oppositional account of her influences. It is as though, in choosing not to write directly about her London experiences, this period had no influence on her aesthetic (or political activism). Ironically, this has meant a lack of attention to the impact of the Rhymers themselves on her work. Similarly, Gosse's focus on her 'Indianness' has led to readings centred around her inauthentic performance of Indian identity. His introduction, then, not only asserts his claim on her talent, career and prominence (eclipsing, for example, her work for the Indian National Congress in the early twentieth century), but sets up a critical narrative that sees her as exemplifying the 'spirit' of the 'East' springing 'from the very soil of India'.[19] Again, attention to the poems themselves, though not the focus of this article, immediately reveals their complex engagement with both Hindu and Muslim spirituality, Indian folk songs and locations, as well as formal and imagistic gestures towards the fin-de-siècle poets. Naidu went on to play a prominent role in Indian nationalist politics: becoming the first Indian woman president of the Indian

National Congress and working with Gandhi on many of his campaigns. She continued to write poetry alongside her political career and the influence of this early period in London can be found across her oeuvre.

Naidu's connection to Yeats, and the influence of his poetry on her own writing, is crucial to networks of cross-cultural Indian and Irish revivalist nationalism in the period. These connections work both ways, of course, and Yeats' interest in India, developed in part through his involvement in the Theosophical Society, led not only to the references to Indian myths in his early poetry, but also to his collaboration with Rabindranath Tagore.[20] Both Naidu and Tagore returned to London in 1912 and it was in this year that the India Society published Tagore's prose translations from the Bengali, *Gitanjali*, with an introduction by Yeats. Tagore was, like Naidu, the 'sign of India' and Naidu garlanded him in 1913 at a dinner honouring Indian poets at the Criterion.[21] Yeats' preface, in more complex ways than Gosse or Symons, shifts continually between difference and continuity: 'A whole people, a whole civilisation, immeasurably strange to us, seems to have been taken up into this imagination; and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness, but because we have met our own image'.[22] As though to signal his own ignorance and hesitation in describing a culture that is not his own, the opening of the introduction includes extensive quotation from a 'distinguished Bengali doctor of medicine' who is able to outline Tagore's background, his influences and his popularity in India.[23] Yeats then sets Tagore in a lyrical tradition in which poetry and religion are 'unbroken'.[24] He is the product, for Yeats, of a 'supreme culture' exemplified by the innocence and directness of vision perceived as lacking in the West.[25] He both pronounces and defers: acknowledging that he cannot access the original Bengali text and has to rely on what, as he puts it, 'my Indians tell me'.[26] The preface paradoxically both translates and yet asserts the 'untranslatable' qualities of Tagore's work, ending, symbolically, with a quotation from Tagore himself. [27]

This brief survey suggests the shifting registers of the 'metropolitan' introduction: at times mediating or translating at others rewriting and silencing. All these modes are in evidence in the introductions penned by E. M. Forster and Leonard Woolf to texts by Mulk Raj Anand. Although much has been written in recent years on Anand's time in London and his position within and without various British institutions and networks, scant attention has been paid to these introductions. They exist as the public face of Anand's wider networks of interaction

with Forster and Woolf, both men with whom he had longstanding personal and intellectual connections and both of whom he exempted from the imperialist beliefs he encountered in Bloomsbury.

Anand arrived in London in 1925 and embarked on a Ph.D. in philosophy at University College London. He had been briefly imprisoned for taking part in the Civil Disobedience campaign of 1921 and on his arrival in London he quickly immersed himself in various leftist networks.[28] Always attuned to the interplay between socialist and anti-imperialist politics, his part in the General Strike of 1926 showed him 'categorically that Britain was organized and run in the interests of a small minority which could suppress the majority as violently at home as it did in the Empire'.[29] Anand was involved with various literary and cultural networks during the second half of the 1920s. He reviewed for T. S. Eliot's periodical *The Criterion* (1928-30) and worked as a proof corrector at the Hogarth Press (probably in 1927).[30] In his *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981) he documents his friendships with not only E. M. Forster and the Woolfs (to whom the text is dedicated), but also Clive Bell, Nancy Cunard, Aldous Huxley, Lytton Strachey, Eric Gill, Arthur Waley and D. H. Lawrence, amongst others. This memoir, alongside his other autobiographical writings, shows not only the wide range of networks within which Anand moved but also the significance of the spaces of literary production and publication which facilitated these connections for colonial writers in modernist London.

In his body of autobiographical writings, some produced decades after the events they recall, Anand is ever alert to issues of patronage, collaboration and influence. He returns to the ways in which the politics of empire cut across and complicate his literary interactions. In *Conversations in Bloomsbury* he dissects these conflicting hierarchies of knowledge: 'I was too overwhelmed by the presence of these legendary literary men. I felt that they did not know very much about my country, and what they knew was through Kipling, or through superficial impressions […] the thing that disturbed me was that I […] would be a hypocrite, hating British rule in India and living on its dole.'[31] But the term 'collaboration' also has a particular place in critical accounts of Anand's life and work in London, namely in relation to what has been called his 'collaborationist' politics. This term marks a simplistic elision with the more directly collaborationist politics of modernist writers such as Ezra Pound or Knut Hamsun. It also alludes to debates in imperial history regarding the role of collaboration between colonial elites and British imperialists. In Anand's

case, accounts of his 'collaborationist' politics point to the various supposedly compromising aspects of his critique of colonialism. These relate to his high caste status (from the Kshatriya or warrior caste), his choice to write in English, and his at times adulatory stance towards Bloomsbury intellectuals. Unsurprisingly, *Untouchable* has been at the centre of such critiques given its focus on subaltern experience and the problematics around such representation in terms of authenticity, language and readership. In an article on *Untouchable*, for example, Arun Mukherjee uses the novel as a case study through which to discuss the homogenizing tendencies of postcolonial studies. He argues that this body of work turns to Indian writing for 'resistance to the colonizer, entirely overlooking collaboration'.[32] He argues, in particular, that the novel's omission of any details about dalit activism in this period amount to its collaborationist stance. By way of contrast, Ben Conisbee Baer asserts instead that Anand 'is trying to represent a subaltern everydayness which has not yet been able to access the upwardly-mobilizing power of the contemporary "untouchable leadership"' as seen in the activism of B. R. Ambedkar.[33]

Kirsten Bluemel, too, argues more generally that Anand's work is caught between 'radical intentionality and collaborationist effects' and refers to his '"collaborationist" fictions of the 1930s'.[34] Bluemel goes on to complicate this account, however, through reference to *Letters On India*, which she reads as 'a radical departure from the politics of mainstream English culture and the liberal, leftist politics of Anand's Bloomsbury friends'.[35] It is in this text from the 1940s, she argues, that Anand launches a fuller critique of British imperialism, by exposing the hypocrisy of the British government in relation to its policies in India when set against its opposition to fascism on the continent. Bluemel's argument conforms to a chronological narrative of increasing anticolonialism (one also employed in the case of Tagore). As Susheila Nasta outlines, his lengthy and productive career has often been simplified into a dichotomy between 'a collaborative and ultimately complicit "babu" figure' or 'a revolutionary Marxist renegade who, in writing back to empire, alienated the majority of his metropolitan English friends'.[36] Narratives of influence on his writing – in relation to the work of James Joyce for example – supposedly preclude the possibility of subversion or resistance.

Such arguments are underscored by Anand's own, oft-cited, anecdote about his transformative encounter with Gandhi. After drafting *Untouchable*, which concerns one day in the life of Bakha, a dalit sweeper and latrine cleaner, Anand

read an article by Gandhi in *Young India* recounting his meeting with a sweeper boy, Uka. Concerned about the authenticity of his own representation, he set off in 1929 to meet Gandhi: 'The Mahatma allowed me to read portions of my novel to him […] he felt I had made Bakha a Bloomsbury intellectual. And he advised me to cut down a hundred or more pages and rewrite the whole […] I revised the book during the next three months in the Sabarmati Ashram'. [37] He made himself over, discarding his 'corduroy suit and necktie' for kurta-pyjamas, taking off the 'mask of the "Brown Sahib" he had 'become in England'.[38] Such narratives of transformation or enlightenment (whether autobiographical or not) simplify and homogenize the more complex and multi-directional collaborations occurring at the level of the text itself. The repetition of the term 'collaboration' or 'collaborationist' suggests an acknowledgement of Anand's deeply networked and interactive place in modernist London, but also the way in which narrativization of his position invariably points to the compromised aspects of those relationships.

Anand's novel uses free indirect speech to evoke the sensory details of Bakha's life in the 'outcastes' colony'.[39] The novel details Bakha's everyday search for food and water and the demeaning humiliations of his work cleaning the latrines. His alienated position leads him to 'stare with wonder and amazement' at the solidarity of the Tommies in the nearby barracks and to treasure the cast-off British uniform that he wears.[40] The British army represents the first in a series of 'solutions' to Bakha's marginalised position within the caste system. The crisis point comes when Bakha, distracted after purchasing some sweets, and neglecting to issue the obligatory warning, bumps into a higher caste man in the street. Horrified at this 'contamination', the man slaps his face. This traumatic event is a moment of awakening for Bakha: 'like a ray of light shooting through the darkness, the recognition of his position, the significance of his lot dawned upon him. It illuminated the inner chambers of his mind'.[41] From here, Bakha has a series of encounters with individuals, belief systems and technologies which aim to pose a solution to his outcaste status: Christianity in the shape of Colonel Hutchinson of the Salvation Army, disregard for 'observance of untouchability' as proclaimed in a public speech by Gandhi, and technological modernity in the shape of the flush toilet as espoused by a young poet, Iqbal Nath Sarshar. At the end of the novel, Bakha is turning homeward with all three voices resounding in his head.

Anand employs features associated with literary modernism to explore subaltern experience: the one-day novel, interior sense perception and the everyday. His choice to write in English points not only to his intended readership but also to his association of untouchability with the colonial subject more generally. As Ben Conisbee Baer writers: his project was 'to inscribe and make visible the unknown, excremental abjection of the colonial margin in the aesthetic heart of the centre'.[42] In addition to the novel's 'faecal matter', the general issue of untouchability was deemed controversial in the 1930s given the debates around political rights for the dalit community in negotiations with Gandhi, the Indian National Congress, and the British Raj. The novel was banned in India and its difficult road to publication in Britain was bound up with connotations of contamination and defilement.

Untouchable was rejected by nineteen publishers (including Macmillan, Cape and Chatto and Windus) before a letter of endorsement from Forster helped Anand secure publication with Wishart, on the condition that Forster's introduction be included.[43] The connection between this delay and the novel's controversial subject matter is underscored by the fact that Anand had already established himself on London's publishing scene prior to 1935. He had published on Indian art and culture (*Persian Painting*, Faber 1930; *Curries and Other Indian Dishes*, Harmondsworth 1932; *A Hindu View of Art*, Allen and Unwin, 1933 and *Studies of Five Poets of the New India*, John Murray, 1934) and a short story collection, *The Lost Child and other Stories* (1934). He had already entered into collaborative publishing projects such as with Eric Gill, who had written an introductory essay on 'Art and Reality' to *A Hindu View of Art*. They had plans to jointly author a book and Anand later described his relationship with Gill as 'an equal friendship […] a collaboration and a creative act'.[44]

Edgell Rickward wrote that Forster's introduction was 'a masterpiece of suggestion and understanding' which would be the book's 'passport through the hostility of the ordinary reviewer'.[45] Forster's role was one of 'decontamination'; his introduction would cleanse the book's potential to outrage. But in the introduction itself Forster openly engages with the book's subject matter by metaphorically defiling himself in order to 'cleanse' Anand. He raises the question of the 'human body relieving itself' and sets this up as a taboo shared by British and Indian civilisations.[46] He then moves from universal reticence about bodily functions to the culturally specific issue of untouchability and ritual uncleanliness: 'a hideous

nightmare unknown to the west'.[47] The introduction oscillates in this way between identification and separation.

In the 1940 edition of the novel, Forster added an opening anecdote which furthers this discourse of alignment. He tells of coming across a copy of *A Passage to India* in which the phrase 'dirty mind' was scrawled in the margin next to a reference to unemptied commodes. Forster both signals connection (he too is a breaker of taboos) at the same time as he acknowledges *Untouchable*'s more sustained and extensive engagement with excrement. He writes: 'Some readers, especially those who consider themselves all-white, will go purple in the face with rage before they have finished a dozen pages'.[48] Confronting the question of 'dirt' head on, he plays with and complicates the associations of lightness/darkness or cleanliness/dirtiness with racial and cultural identity. He then reorients the terms of the debate by arguing that the novel is 'indescribably clean': purified because of its 'directness' of treatment.[49] Presumably, Forster, who has 'polluted' himself through the collaboration, then, like Anand, is purified through his own directness. But this is where the continuities end. Anand is, according to Forster, uniquely qualified to tell this tale. It is a story which could only have been told by an Indian but more than that, 'an Indian who observed from the outside'.[50]

The 'collaboration' marked by the joint publication of introduction and novel speaks to the fraught exchanges of metropolitan and colonial modernists. In one sense the Forster/Anand conjunction is hardly collaborative at all given that Forster's piece was required and on a literal level involved very little shared labour. What's more, of course, even in the spatial politics of the book, the introduction's primary position suggests containment and hierarchy. In terms of content, too, Forster offers a simplified and problematic representation of 'Indian' culture and writing. But in other ways, the introduction suggests a form of collaboration that allows for difference and does not assume the shared world view often connoted by the term. Taking a longer view, attention to subsequent editions of the novel underlines the mobility of the collaboration. In the 2014 Penguin edition, for example, the novel has a new introduction by Ramachandra Guha and Forster's piece is relegated to the position of afterword.[51]

But however we read the intricacies of the relationship between introduction and text, the conjunction also points to a wider context of connection and collaboration between Anand and leftist networks in the mid to late 1930s and into

the 1940s. These networks cut across Marxist and anti-imperialist groupings and reveal the complex lines of interaction in this period. In June 1935, for example, both Anand and Forster attended the International Congress for the Defence of Culture in Paris and the following year Anand gave an address to the London branch of the organisation. These meetings were influential, as Susheila Nasta has explored, on Anand's founding, together with Ahmed Ali and Sajjad Zaheer (who also attended the Paris Congress), of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association in 1935 at the Nanking Chinese Restaurant in London.[52]

At Marxist reading groups and meetings, as well as in the pages of periodicals such as the *Left Review,* Anand found common ground with London's socialists. Ralph Fox, in particular, became a close friend and in a reversal of roles, Anand wrote the introduction to the reissue, in 1944, of Ralph Fox's *The Novel and the People* (1937). Anand is now the one offering a 'passport' to the reading public. In his introduction he describes meeting Fox at various 'study circles off the Gray's Inn Road' and goes on to pay tribute to a deep intellectual and personal friendship.[53] The two men shared anti-imperialist as well as Marxist views. Fox had published *The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism* in 1933 and in his introduction, Anand praises Fox's 'analysis of Imperialist rivalries in the East'.[54] Their discussions led them to Marx's own writings on India. As Anand wrote later in his autobiography, *Apology for Heroism:* 'a series of letters on India written by Marx to the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1853 fell into my hands at this time. I discussed these in detail with my friend Ralph Fox, who had just then written on the colonial history of British Imperialism. And a whole new world was opened to me'.[55] These letters were eight essays written by Marx during the final days of the East India Company and outlining the devastating effects of British industrialisation on India.

Marx's writing clearly had a profound effect on Anand, who went on to publish *Marx and Engels on India* (1937) and then, in 1942, his own *Letters On India* with the Labour Book Service.[56] The text is comprised of a hypothetical, epistolary exchange between Anand and a 'Tom Brown', a socialist from Walthamstow, who wants to know more about India: 'there is widespread ignorance in this country of the history of British imperialism in India, as it could be told by the subject peoples of Empire'.[57] *Letters on India* models the collaborative politics of international socialism and anti-colonialism through dialogue on a wide range of issues to do with colonial rule:

nationalist activism, trade unionism and working conditions in India. And all this in the immediate context of colonial participation in WW2: 'for us in India, as for you in Europe, the issue is one of life in a democratic future or death under fascism. See to it then that India is liberated for the struggle against fascism'.[58]

Here we see Anand's sense that, as Nasta has argued, his role was one of mediator and translator between Britain and India.[59] Anand tackles the question of ignorance head on, correcting the impression that India is a 'vast torrid expanse, full of natives, an amorphous mass of black men with very few clothes and even less culture, "distant" and "foreign" to "us British"'.[60] He is also deeply critical of British rule in India, particularly around the 1935 Government of India Act and Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to India in 1942 to secure India's support in WW2. He describes in detail the lead up to the Cripps Mission and the reasons why the post-dated offer of dominion status was rejected by all concerned. Then he outlines how British politicians and the press 'have sought to put the responsibility for the failure of the negotiations on the intransigence of Congress leaders, and the usual talk of Muslim-Hindu differences'.[61] From here, the letters track back and outline the history of British rule in India focusing specifically on Indian agricultural labourers and peasant movements against colonialism. 'Tom Brown' concludes that they must 'work for a world view'.[62]

The book was published with an introduction by Leonard Woolf which is also in letter form, addressed 'Dear Anand.' Woolf is self-conscious about his position in the volume, writing that: 'it will not be the usual kind of introduction' in which a 'distinguished or undistinguished person irrelevantly pats the author on the back'.[63] Woolf, who had known Anand for many years by this point, states that he agrees with Anand's 'socialist interpretation' of the history of India, has for years been in favour of Indian independence and shares Anand's criticisms of the 1935 Government of India Act, but that 'imperialism produces an extreme nationalist psychology in its victims and its nationalism is just as ugly and dangerous in Indians as in Britons'.[64] He writes that he disagrees with the 'dangerously biased' presentation of an 'extreme Congress view'.[65] After two examples of Anand's 'misrepresentation' of facts relating to British involvement in India, Woolf comes to his main point: what he perceives as Anand's side-lining of the Muslim League and its leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah: 'Your references to the problem and to the Muslim League are – you speak plainly in your book, and you won't mind my doing the same

in the introduction – fantastic […] You and the Congress Party are beginning to treat the Muslims and Mr. Jinnah as Mr. de Valera treated Ulster'.[66]

Woolf's work for the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International and Imperial Questions involved identification of Indian self-government as the one of its most pressing concerns.[67] His work for the Committee included advising government on the Simon Commission (1927), the Round Table Conferences (1930-3) and the formation of the Government of India Act (1934-5). He himself was critical of the British government's policies on self-government: 'at each stage the demands of Congress for self-government, and Dominion status were met by such grudging and contemptible dollops of self-government that any politically conscious Indian could only conclude that once more the tragedy of freedom would have to be acted out in India – the alien rulers would release their hold on the subject people only if forced to do so by bloody violence'.[68] While he was certainly in agreement with Anand's driving political motivations, his hatred of nationalism's effects on minority peoples, along with some residual defensive patriotism, caused him to introduce the text with this serious indictment.

This 'collaboration' marks a much more overtly fraught interchange. Woolf notes that he has read the book more than once but remains convinced of his position. Not only that, he adds that his views are in accordance with the Selection Committee of the Labour Book Service who requested he write the introduction.[69] All parties feel the book should be published, but readers need to be guided by Woolf's supposedly measured and rationalist framing so they 'won't uncritically swallow it whole'.[70] As with Forster's introduction to *Untouchable*, the text cannot stand alone: the colonial 'bias' must be publicly 'corrected'.

But this 'collaboration' is also about public debate: one that continued within and beyond the pages of the volume. Also included in the text (at Anand's insistence) is his measured response, addressed 'Dear Woolf'. Anand rebuffs Woolf point by point, exposing the limitations of Cripps mission and arguing that exaggerating Hindu/Muslim opposition is British strategy. Woolf ends up appearing out of touch and misinformed. George Orwell reviewed the book in the *Tribune*, followed his predecessors by opening the review 'Dear Mulk', and supporting Anand by stating that 'it doesn't seem to me that you misrepresent the relationship between your country and mine'.[71] He dismisses Woolf's position as 'sentimentality of the left' concluding that 'the Englishman must see that his domination in India is indefensible;

the Indian must see that to side with the Fascists for the sake of revenge against Britain would do him no good'.[72] Further exchanges took place in the pages of the *Tribune*: Woolf taking issue with Orwell's description of his introduction as an 'angry letter' and Anand denying he had requested Woolf's introduction and calling for its omission from future editions.[73]

Until his departure for India in 1946, Anand continued to mix with Leonard Woolf. In his autobiographical works of the 1970s and 80s he singled out Woolf (and Forster) for his progressive anti-imperialist views. The two men clearly had an acquaintanceship, if not a friendship, although its traces can be found more readily in Anand's body of autobiographical writings than in Woolf's. Leonard Woolf's introduction is often used as evidence of Anand's gradual dissociation from London leftists, as 'he tested the limits of their revolutionary commitments', particularly in relation to Indian independence.[74] In fact, as Susheila Nasta has described, 'the reciprocity of intellectual companionship, as witnessed across the production and transmission of his non-fictional writings, indicates a far more engaging if untidy dynamic of cultural and political exchange'.[75] The Anand/Woolf collaboration, if it can be called that, on one level reinforces an imperial power dynamic between colony and metropole, but it is also about public debate between two intellectuals unafraid to air their differing views on complex issues. While Woolf's anti-imperialism did not go far enough for Anand and Anand clearly wanted to attest publicly to this, their 'collaborative' disputes did not curtail their personal relations. This suggests that a homogenzied or simplified binary of colonial/metropolitan is inadequate for the shifting and mutable relations, both personal and professional, between intellectuals in this period. The colonial relationship here adds complexity, urgency and animosity to the collaboration but does not end it.

Tracing the content, composition and afterlives of these introductions and their relationship to the texts they preface, illuminates both the hierarchies within the British empire during the modernist period but *also* the way those hierarchies are complicated and questioned. These introductions arise out of, and are marked by, imperial gesture and patronage, but these modes are also undercut, and openly rebuffed, by the texts that follow. They point to the contingency of collaboration: a particular moment in the dynamic and shifting relations of the political and cultural viewpoints of their individual authors. The text/introduction collaboration – given the separateness of its parts – is a form of conjunction that can tolerate and contain

difference or debate. Highlighting ‘a scene of exchange’, and an interrelationship that continually extends the boundaries of European modernism, they are the published trace of wider and more complex encounters that shaped all involved.[76]

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[1] J. Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 20.
[2] R. Badenhausen, *T. S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1.
[3] Ibid., p. 7.
[4] See, for example, U. Seshagiri, *Race and the Modernist Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) and H. Booth, ‘Claude McKay in Britain: race, sexuality and poetry’, *Modernism and Race*, ed. Len Platt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 137-55.
[5] G. Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. ix-lxxxvii (p. xi).
[6] Ibid, p. x.
[7] F. M. Ford, ‘Preface: Rive Gauche’, Jean Rhys, *The Left Bank and Other Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927), pp. 7-27 (p. 24).
[8] Ibid. p. 26.
[9] Ibid, pp. 23 and 27.
[10] A. Singh, ‘The Lifting and the Lifted: Prefaces to Colonial Modernist Texts’, *Wasafiri* 21.1(2006): pp. 1-3 (p. 3).
[11] See A. Snaith, *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 76.
[12] A. Symons, ‘Introduction’, Sarojini Naidu, *The Golden Threshold* (London: Heinemann, 1905), pp. 9-23 (p. 16)
[13] Ibid, pp. 19, 17, 16.
[14] Ibid, p. 16.
[15] S. Naidu, *The Golden Threshold* (London: Heinemann, 1905), p. 88.
[16] Ibid., p. 46.
[17] E. Gosse, ‘Introduction’, Sarojini Naidu, *The Bird of Time* (London: Heinemann, 1912), pp. 1-8 (p. 1).
[18] Ibid, pp. 4-5.
[19] Ibid., p. 6.
[20] See E. Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals, 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 113-6 for more details of these references and connections.
[21] See E. Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals,* p. 222 and *The Times*, June 16, 1913, p. 7.
[22] W. B. Yeats, ‘Introduction’, Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp. vii-xxii (pp. xvi-xvii).
[23] Ibid., p. vii.
[24] Ibid., p. xiv.
[25] Ibid., p. xiii.
[26] Ibid., p. xiii.
[27] Ibid, p. xiii.

[28] See C. L. Innes, *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 218.
[29] M. R. Anand, *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas* (Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1975), p.64.
[30] See R. Marler, *Bloomsbury Pie: The Making of the Bloomsbury Boom* (London: Virago, 1997), p. 135.
[31] M. R. Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 23-4.
[32] A. Mukherjee, 'The Exclusions of Postcolonial Theory and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*: A Case Study', *Ariel* 22:3 (1991): 38-43 (32).
[33] B. C. Baer, 'Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers' Association, *Modernism/modernity* 16.3(2009): 575-95 (592-3).
[34] K. Bluemel, *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 88 and 91.
[35] Ibid., p. 91.
[36] S. Nasta, 'Negotiating a "New World Order": Mulk Raj Anand as Public Intellectual at the Heart of Empire (1925-1945)', *South Asian Resistances in Britain 1858-1947*, ed. Rehana Ahmed and Sumita Mukherjee (London: Continuum, 2012): pp. 140-160 (p. 142).
[37] M. R. Anand, 'Why I Write', *Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand*, ed. K. K. Sharma (Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1978), pp. 1-8 (p. 5).
[38] Ibid, p. 5.
[39] M. R. Anand, *Untouchable* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1940), p. 9.
[40] Ibid, p. 10.
[41] Ibid, p. 52.
[42] B. C. Baer, 'Shit Writing', p. 577.
[43] See R. Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers in Twentieth-Century Britain: Culture in Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 17-23. See also S. Nasta, 'Between Bloomsbury and Gandhi? The Background to the Publication of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*.' *Books Without Borders* Vol. 2. Ed. Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp.151-69. Forster also wrote introductions to other texts by Indian writers including K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Literature and Authorship in India*; G. V. Desani's *Hali*, Huthisingh's *Maura* and Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra*' (see E. M. Foster, *Only Connect: Letters to Indian Friends,* Ed. Syed Hamid Husain (London: Arnold-Heinemann, 1979), p. 9).
[44] See S. Nasta, 'Negotiating', p. 146 and M. Fisher, 'Interview with Mulk Raj Anand', *World Literature Written in English* 13(1974): 109-22 (117).
[45] Quoted in R. Ranasinha, *South Asian*, p. 18.
[46] E. M. Forster, 'Preface', M. R. Anand, *Untouchable* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1940), pp. v-viii (p. v).
[47] Ibid., p. vi.
[48] Ibid., p. v.
[49] Ibid., p. v.
[50] Ibid., p. vi.
[51] Guha's preface notes the absence of reference to Ambedkar in the novel and with it his more radical approach to untouchability: namely a critique of Hinduism. Guha discusses the differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar's positions on the issue

and notes that Anand did go on to write an introduction to the 1980 edition of Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* (originally published in 1936).
[52] S. Nasta, 'Negotiating', p. 147.
[53] R. Fox, *The Novel and the People* (London: Cobbett Publishing, 1944), p. 16.
[54] Ibid., p.9.
[55] M. R. Anand, *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas* (Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1975), p.105. The letters had been published in book form in India in 1936.
[56] These publications are part of wider collaborations between British left-wing publishing and Indian intellectuals, such as C. P. Dutt's editing of writing by Marx and Engels for Lawrence and Wishart. See also Nicholas Owen, *The British Left and India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[57] M. R. Anand, *Letters on India* (London: The Labour Book Service, 1942), p. 29.
[58] Ibid, p. 3.
[59] Nasta, 'Negotiating', p. 152.
[60] Anand, *Letters*, p. 148.
[61] Ibid., p. 13.
[62] Ibid, p 92.
[63] L. Woolf, 'Introduction', *Letters*, pp. vii-ix (p. vii).
[64] Ibid, p. viii.
[65] Ibid, pp. viii and vii.
[66] Ibid, p. ix..
[67] L. Woolf, *An Autobiography. Vol. 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 352-3.
[68] Ibid, p. 355.
[69] Woolf, 'Introduction', p. vii.
[70] Ibid, p. vii.
[71] G. Orwell, *Orwell and Politics*, ed. Peter Davison (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), p. 173.
[72] Ibid, p.175.
[73] See *Tribune* 2 and 9 April 1943.
[74] Bluemel, p. 87.
[75] Nasta, 'Negotiating', p. 146.
[76] A. Singh, p. 2.